

Biography



D'ARCY AS HIMSELF

Beginning life anew is never an easy task, and in the music business, it's often an immensely challenging proposition. But for Toronto native D'Arcy Wickham, the urge to write and record his music has led to the release of his brand new independent album, *Dust and Loneliness*. The album is a collection of 10 songs in the rootsy tradition of singer/songwriters like John Hiatt, Jackson Browne or John Prine. They are songs that reflect the maturation of an artist who has given his life to his music, and has seen both the overpowering optimism and disturbing cynicism of the often callous record industry.

Wickham describes himself first and foremost as a fan of good songwriting. A Toronto native, he grew up on the songs of The Beatles and Crosby, Stills & Nash. Wickham first picked up a guitar at the age of 14, and was writing his own songs shortly thereafter. Like most high school teens, he formed his own rock band, which played the requisite gigs at dances and parties. That penchant for live performing continued into university (he attended the University of Windsor), where he performed in local coffee houses, and joined a string of bands for numerous shows at clubs surrounding the school. It was also at the U. of Windsor that he met the players who would eventually form the core of the Ian Thomas Band.

Wickham embarked on a professional career following his graduation, performing solo acoustic-style sets in clubs throughout the province of Ontario, western Canada, and the northern US, including a date at the famous Bitter End club in Greenwich Village in 1972. In 1974, Wickham decided to record his own material, which led to a series of transcription recordings at the CBC. It was there that he met Ian Thomas, who was in the process of putting together a band for his first major cross Canada tour. At the time, Thomas was enjoying his first significant success, and Wickham suddenly found himself touring across Canada as a member of the band, performing at venues such as Massey Hall and Ontario Place. But after a considerable amount of time on the road, Wickham decided it was time to reinvest in his own musical interests. He enlisted Thomas as his producer and recorded the song *Old Fashioned Lady*, a single that was picked up by Polydor in 1976, and became a hit on the Canadian country charts. "The single got played on about 50 odd stations. I didn't even know what radio promotion was. I went from station to station in this beat up old Volvo with boxes of my singles. I'd knock on the doors of radio stations and see if they would play it. And touring out west made a difference, because I'd call on the radio stations in every town I was in."

For several years, Wickham retreated somewhat from the music business, in an attempt to get his feet back on solid ground. He turned his part-time efforts as a guitar teacher into a full-time pursuit, and joined renowned Toronto-based band Party Lights. Party Lights turned out to be a prosperous and lengthy terminus in Wickham's musical career. The professional players found steady work at weddings and business functions, along with more high-profile clients, such as the National Hockey League, the Ontario Liberal party, and the British Royal family.

The combination of the Party Lights engagements and his own guitar-teaching business allowed Wickham to regain some firm financial footing. And he also found his own personal happiness, remarrying in 1986, and becoming a father. The revitalization in his life also led to his rediscovery of his musical muse. Quite simply, Wickham began to perform and write again, and he loved what he was doing.

When the days with Party Lights began to come to an end, around 1996, Wickham decided to re-explore his solo career. And via a steady engagement at Toronto's Free Times Café, he began to write the music that would become Dust and Loneliness. With a collection of songs down on paper, and the financial backing secure thanks to his now-thriving music instruction business, Wickham called on Thomas to help him make the album.

D'arcy Wickham's accumulated experiences in the music world leave him with few illusions about what lies ahead. However, in a musical maelstrom dominated by cartoonish boy bands and raging rap and heavy metal artists, Wickham feels that there is a desire for his brand of music. And regardless of what becomes of Dust and Loneliness, he will continue to make his music any way he can. "I have to release my own music, it has to happen. Even if nothing happens with it, I want to make some kind of statement with my music. I love to play, I love entertaining people, it's inside me, it's something I have to do."

D'ARCY AS A PERFORMER

Notable Personalities who have referred clients to D'Arcy

Gordon Lightfoot
12th Fret Guitarist's Pro Shop
David Wilcox
Ottawa Folklore Centre
Danny Marks
Evan Solomon
Bruce Dowbiggan

Notable Musicians Who have worked and recorded with D'Arcy

Ian Thomas
George Olliver
Dennis Pendrith
Daniel Lanoi
Peter Cardinali
Guido Basso
Bill Dillon
Raffi
David Woodhead
Rick Gratton
Kerry Crawford
Steve Goodman

Guitar Stores D'Arcy has worked for

Toronto Folklore Centre 1971-1974
Millwheel Guitar shop 1975-1986
Ring Music 1987-2002

D'ARCY AS A TEACHER

Notable Personalities who have studied with D'Arcy

Shelagh Rogers	— Host CBC Radio Show 'This Morning'
Daniel Lanoi	— Recording Artist/Producer (Bob Dylan,U2)
Ronnie Cox	— Hollywood Actor ('Total Recall','Deliverance')
David McFarlane	— Globe and Mail columnist,author
Evan Solomon	— TV Host and author
Daniel Richler	— TV host and author, son of Mordecai Richler

D'Arcy regularly carries a full complement of 80, one-half hour lessons per week (average) — this represents an astounding 3840 lessons per year!

Canadian Music critic Richard Flohil comments:

"If all the young guitarists who had been taught by Wickham were to line up for a performance, they'd probably fill Maple Leaf Gardens... No question: The man can play."
(from a review of D'Arcy's recording 'Dust and Loneliness' Nov.3/2000 The Record)

D'Arcy stresses three important things in learning guitar.

These are:

Lessons should always be fun

Lessons should always be about learning to teach yourself

Start everything slow and easy

D'Arcy has two fully equipped studios for serving clients. Equipment includes:

Recording gear

Drum machine

Electric and acoustic Guitars

Amplifiers

Tuners, music stand, foot stools, guitar stands

Mirror, metronome

Five fully developed Guitar courses (two introductory programs), Including:

Beginner Guitar

Folk Fingerstyle and Acoustic Blues

Rock and Electric Blues rhythm and lead

Country and Bluegrass Guitar

Acoustic and Electric Slide Styles

Introduction to Jazz Guitar

Introduction to Classical Guitar

Over 1000 hours of prepared lessons.

This deep infrastructure of prepared material inspires confidence on the part of students. They can pick their own song choices, lessons can be custom designed to each student's interests and needs, valuable lesson time is not used writing out music for homework, time can be devoted to review of the last lesson demonstrating the new piece and playing along with the student!

- A Huge Catalogue of Taped Versions of Course Music.
- Original versions of course material can be dubbed for study.
- A Library of Guitar Method Books and Magazines.
- For research and in-depth development
- Transcribing and Arranging.

Many students have very specific needs, and require a lot of flexibility in approach. Often the request is for a 'lift' of a song or solo, or a personalized arrangement of a certain tune.

D'Arcy long experience with this not only makes it easy, but can show students how to develop their own 'ear' for lifting music.